

## **New Albany Ballet Company**

### **Pre-professional Division Handbook**

The New Albany Ballet Company's Pre-professional division, including its Trainee program, has the goal of providing young dancers with an advanced, pre-professional education in dance. This is sustained by a core group of students and teachers who seek excellence every day with dedication and commitment. Students are chosen by the faculty to continue their training at this advanced level with a year-round commitment. This is a rigorous program consisting of daily classes and rehearsals in ballet technique, pointe, variations, classical ballet repertoire, modern dance, jazz and contemporary. This advanced level training helps prepare dancers for auditions for national summer programs that will enhance their training, develop their self-esteem, and educate them about the world of ballet at a national level. This division provides performance opportunities in full-length story ballets, classical repertory, contemporary ballets and new works created for the students. To prepare students to perform the difficult classical ballet repertoire, a high level of commitment and consistent dedication of time and effort is required from each pre-professional ballet student.

### **Pre-Professional Division Regulations**

#### **Class Requirements**

- Pre-professional division - At all times, including the summer months, four ballet (4) technique, three (3) pointe and (1) modern technique class must be maintained per week. Excused absences include ONLY illness, injury, family emergencies and religious holidays. Any absences for reasons other than those listed above must be made up in the same or following week. This may require that a student take an extra class on another day or two classes in one day.
- Trainee level – Trainee level students are required to attend all trainee classes offered with the exceptions of tap, modern workshop and contemporary. Trainees should try to attend a lower level technique class later in the day, if they are unable to attend their regular class.
- All levels – All students are required to communicate with faculty about any absences. To be allowed to perform with the pre-pro program, class attendance minimums must be maintained. Absences such as illness and injury should be discussed with the instructors. Students are required to attend all intensive workshops, seminars, and master classes hosted by NABC. Students will receive class credit for any summer intensive programs they attend. If a class is cancelled due to a specific dance related activity such as a ballet in the cinema performance or a live professional performance, dancers are required to attend this activity unless otherwise excused by the NABC faculty. Tuition will not be prorated for family vacations during the summer or during the school year.

#### **Class Attendance**

- Attendance will be taken at every class and rehearsal. Monthly warning notices will only be sent out when students are behind in their minimum attendance.
- Modern and Jazz attendance: Modern class is a required class for all pre-professional students. If a student misses more than three modern classes in any given quarter, he/she will need to make up the modern classes missed in the level below during that quarter. Jazz class is not required although highly recommended for ALL pre professional students. If a student misses more than 3 jazz classes in a quarter and does not make up the class, the student will not be permitted to be in the recital piece.
- Rehearsals: Students may not miss more than one rehearsal per month for any role in a ballet (these absences may occur consecutively). This equates to 25% of rehearsal time for any given piece. If a student misses more than one rehearsal per month for any role in a ballet, a student's casting will be reviewed by the faculty and possibly altered. If there are extenuating circumstances such as injury,

illness, family emergencies or religious conflicts, please contact the rehearsal director. Other extracurricular activities are not considered extenuating circumstances. Students who are traveling to visit colleges and taking the SAT or ACT are exempt from this rule, but excessive absences will affect casting. If a student does not maintain the minimum amount of classes, they will not be allowed to perform in school productions. Students who are injured and or ill, but still able to perform must observe all rehearsals. Students may not miss **ANY** rehearsals during the two weeks prior to a major performance with the exception of the above listed excused absences or school activities that count as a grade. If a student cannot attend dress rehearsal for a piece, the student may not perform in that piece.

### **Tardiness**

- All students are to be in the classroom and physically prepared to begin prior to the first combination of class. Late students should discuss their tardiness with the instructor. Excessively late students may not be permitted to participate. Pointe, variations classes and rehearsals may not be attended without a prior technique class or warm-up at the discretion of the faculty. If a student is late to class or rehearsal or is injured, the student must observe the class and rehearsal.

### **Injuries**

Injury in dance is common and injury prevention is important. Proper stretching, Pilates, yoga, and good nutrition are all part of a healthy injury prevention plan and a dancer's responsibility.

- Any injuries must be immediately reported to all teachers. Students should communicate with teachers frequently about any long-term injuries. Teachers will work with students about how to take care of injuries and modify movements, if necessary, in the classroom. If a student cannot perform a movement during regular class time (for example, jumping or turning), then that movement should not be performed during rehearsals.
- Dancers are expected to observe classes during long term injuries. Dancers who cannot do weight bearing exercises will do floor barre along with the class and can mark upper body work during the center. It is crucial for dancers to not fall behind the curriculum when they are injured. Dancers are excused to attend physical therapy and doctor's appointments during this time. When recovering and resuming classwork with the intention of returning to the stage in the near future, dancers should schedule their appointments to allow class participation even if it needs to be in a lower level. The student's class tuition will be discounted during this time at a 50% reduction of their usual class rate.
- PP students who are suffering long term injuries without class participation and rehearsal participation for more than 3-4 weeks must be dancing full out on pointe (if required) no later than 2 rehearsal weekends before a performance run. The difficulty of roles will be considered when the faculty makes final casting decisions. Decisions will be made in the best interest of the dancer's health, ability and quality of the performance.

### **Studio Communications**

- Teachers can be reached by email at their first name @newalbanyballet.com For instance, Tara can be reached at [tara@newalbanyballet.com](mailto:tara@newalbanyballet.com).
- We use email and Remind 101 to communicate within the studio. Occasionally, class announcements or schedule changes may be given in the classroom verbally or posted on the wall that don't go home

to the parent. Parents are encouraged to ask their dancer questions about classes, upcoming events, schedules, etc.

### **Dress Code**

- Ballet Classes: Ladies – Class leotards and pink tights worn under the leotard and over the foot. Pink ballet shoes or pointe shoes with ribbons and elastics sewn. The hair should be neatly secured to the back of the head. No loose hair around the face or neck. Solid colored ballet skirts are permitted for pointe classes only. Please wear appropriate undergarments that are suited to ballet; do not wear traditional bras or sports bras.
- Males – Black or white shoes with elastics sewn. Black tights with class shirts for males. Hair will be cut so that it does not fall in the face while dancing.
- Leg warmers are allowed only if a student has an injury. They should be tight fitting and light pink. Leg warmers must be removed for Center and all rehearsals.
- All warm up clothing must be removed prior to the first combination of class and during all rehearsals. Dancers will leave their warm ups near their personal belongings and not at the barre.
- Small earrings and extremely thin, short necklaces may be worn and hair ornaments that are not distracting. Rings, watches and bracelets are to be removed.
- Make sure that all pointe shoes are strong, pliant, and sewn properly with ribbons and elastic. Pointe shoes used for rehearsals and classes should not be “dead.” Ballet technique cannot properly be performed and is dangerous with worn out shoes. Order all shoes before they are needed so that there is ample time for them to be sewn. They should be ready to be used when old shoes are worn out. Pointe work often leads to blisters and other foot problems. Students should take care of their feet and tape them accordingly so that these problems do not interfere with their work.
- Modern, Jazz and Tap Classes – The dress code for these classes will be communicated by individual instructors.
- Dancers should remove all warm ups before going to the barre at the beginning of class. Warm ups should be stored with dancers’ personal belongings.

### **Class and Rehearsal Participation**

- Dancers who cannot fully participate in a rehearsal due to injury lack of a proper warm up, but who are able to mark their choreography should be dressed in appropriate classroom attire with their hair properly secured.
- If students arrive at the studio late for any reason, they must have instructor permission to participate in classes and rehearsals. For their own health and safety, no dancer may participate without a proper warm up. Students should take a lower level barre or class to participate in rehearsals. Advanced dancers including PP3/4 and trainee students may, at the discretion of the instructor, do an individual 15-20 minute barre warm up including plies, tendus, degages, rond de jambes, fondus, frappes and grand battements.
- Dancers should be able to perform full out at all times unless they have an injury.
- Every student is responsible for all choreography and corrections that have been learned during rehearsal time. Movement will not be re-taught. If a student has been absent, it is his/her responsibility to learn the missed information. This includes corrections as well as choreography.
- All pre-professional students are expected to come to all rehearsals with a positive attitude and energy to dance. Please enter the room ready to move and ready to give full attention to the choreographer/teacher in the room.

- Dancers who are understudying roles are expected to know their choreography and corrections fully. They should be standing and participating during the rehearsal in the spaces on the side and in the back of the studio.

### **Classroom Rules**

- Social time is important at the studio. All socializing should be done physically in the common areas of the studio. Studio space is to be used for dancing, stretching, marking and reviewing choreography. Socializing is not permitted in class/rehearsal.
- Students should be stretching and preparing for classes before teachers enter the room. Preparing mentally and physically for class is expected. When the teacher enters the room, students are expected to be quiet and ready for class and rehearsal. Teachers should not need to ask the students to enter the room.
- Students are asked to arrive early for class so they have time to stretch. If there is not room in the dressing room to do so please stretch in the following areas: playroom, long hallway, and or lobby.
- Be ready and know the first combination at the barre.
- Students must take responsibility in applying corrections, understanding combinations, and learning choreography.
- Students are not to turn the fans on or off without approval of the teacher.
- Dancers are expected to dance full out every class and rehearsal. If a student is unable to dance full out he/she must notify the teacher at the start of the class/rehearsal of the reason.
- Students are expected to display confidence, determination, and an overall positive attitude at all times in the classroom. Do not hide at the back of the room being fearful of making mistakes or not being perfect. Making mistakes is how one learns. “Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.” – Samuel Beckett
- Technology is not to be used inside the studio. With the permission of the rehearsal director, dancers may video portions of rehearsal to make a copy of choreography for personal review or to observe and learn from their rehearsals. Videos of choreography may not be posted to any social media without the express permission of the choreographer or rehearsal director.
- Dancers should be stretching, doing conditioning or reviewing choreography prior to the beginning of class when space allows.

### **Studio and Theater Etiquette**

- Students should be mindful of the other parents and students that are in the school. Students should keep the level of noise down and clean up after themselves. If students eat food in the studio, please pick up afterwards. Do not leave food in the dressing room, lobby or other common areas.
- All dancers should take good care of their costumes while at home, at the studio or theater and in transit. Always properly store all costumes. Pancake tutus must always be stored either flat on the floor on a sheet or towel. Dresses and long Romantic tutus should be hung, but a French tutu (thigh length) should be hung upside down to maintain the fluidity of the tulle. When in the costume, please sit and stand in a fashion that will not damage the costume.
- When sitting in the theater, keep your feet down off of the seats.
- When in the theater, do not eat meals in costume. Water and foods that will not damage a costume such as dried fruit, fresh veggies, etc. may be eaten in costume. As space is tight backstage, please be considerate of other dancers’ space in the dressing rooms. Please keep your belongings together so that separate costume parts are not lost.

- If a studio is available before a class, dancers should prepare for class in the studio instead of socializing in the hallways or common areas of the building.

### **Summer Intensives**

Although it is encouraged for dancers to attend outside summer programs, the faculty does not suggest that dancers under the age of 13 attend intensive programs over the length of one or two weeks in the summer. Summer programs are of great value once a dancer has a strong base of knowledge from which to assimilate new information. These programs tend to be expensive and the dancer will gain much more out of the program as teenager. This is the age that their technical skills need to be honed and expanded by knowledge of other styles and techniques in dance. The NABC pre-professional summer intensive is mandatory. The dates of our intensive will be released in early January and all family vacations, extra-curricular summer programs and school functions need to be planned around these dates.

### **Private lessons/private coaching**

At the Pre-professional level, all private lessons should be suggested by and/or cleared with the faculty. It is discouraged by the faculty of NABC for students to seek out private lessons for the purpose of preparing for specific roles in upcoming auditions.

### **Recital**

Pre-professional students will be cast in recital pieces by the faculty member choreographing/setting the recital piece. Casting will be posted either on the studio webpage or on the studio call board. Dancers will be billed for recital rehearsals after the recital at the following rate: (teacher's hourly rate divided by the number of dancers in the piece multiplied by the number of rehearsals). Dancers will not be billed for any extra rehearsals called in the theatre/warm up classes in the theatre/ nor stage time setting the piece.

Casting is done by the choreographer. Pre-professional dancers will all be cast in the class modern piece, jazz if they attend jazz class starting in September, and at least one ballet piece. If a dancer decides not to participate in the additional ballet piece she must notify the choreographer prior to the first rehearsal.

### **Recital Costumes**

The choreographer will decide the costume needs of the piece and a costume will be ordered or rented. It is the goal of our program to make the pre- professional dancer look like a pre-professional dancer. For that reason, a more expensive tutu, bodice or leotard may need to be ordered. If a costume is rented, the costume needs to be returned by the first day of summer classes.

### **Pre-professional Auditions and Rehearsals**

Pre-professional dancers are required to attend the pre-professional Nutcracker auditions, if they intend on participating. Please plan accordingly. Nutcracker auditions are usually one of the last two weeks in August/first week in September. Most schools start back at this time so our goal is to have everyone in town and at the audition.

Casting is final and once the faculty has posted the casting no changes/alterations will be made for any reason. All understudies are expected to be at all rehearsals. All cast members and understudies are expected to know all choreography and corrections and are to be marking or practicing their choreography in the back of the room during rehearsals. The faculty may also make a decision to allow the understudy the opportunity to perform the role in addition to the original cast member. This will be decided by the faculty and the dancers involved will be notified. All decisions are made by the faculty with the best interests of the performance, dancer's health and well-being, and cast as a whole.